

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method for exploiting location information inherent in the location of points within a transmitted signal constellation. A common method for assigning weights to branch metrics in a Viterbi decoder is to assign Hamming weights which are summations of the number of places in which a received bit pattern differs from the bit pattern assigned to a branch metric. Signal strength information may be incorporated into the weight assigned to a branch metric in the Viterbi decoder. Additionally information inherent in the location of the points within a constellation may be taken into account. Bit errors which require a larger deviation to occur are given higher weights, and bit errors which require less deviation to occur are given lower weights. By taking into account signal strength and location information up to 2dB of coding gain can be realized.

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